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8/9 1983
VOLUME 22
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Pages 2 to 24

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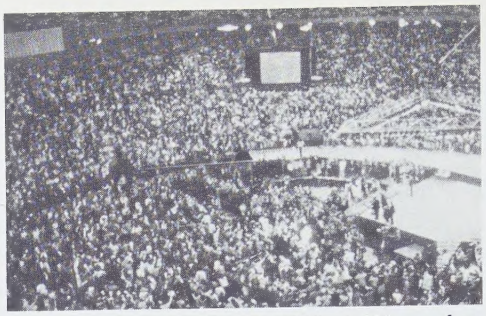

2 *SPECIAL: MARCH 20, 1983. 20,000 members of the New Humanity Section of the Focolare Movement met in Rome for their 1st International Congress.*

3 *TOWARDS A NEW HUMANITY: opening talk of the congress was give Miss Chiara Lubich, founder of the Foc Movement.*

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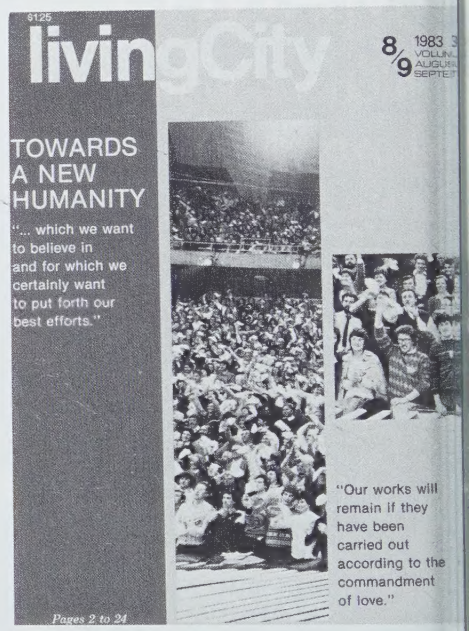
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We would like to call our readers' attention to fact that this issue of *Living City* is for Au and September.

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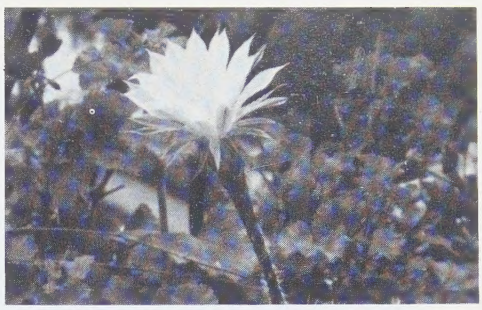
20 *THE GOSPEL IS LIFE FOR SOULS AND ALL OF HUMANITY: Pope John Paul's address to the participants of the Congress.*



26 *MONTHLY WORD OF LIFE.*

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Towards a New Humanity

Rome
March 20, 1983

"Towards a New Humanity": this was the courageous proposal which animated the 1st International Congress of the New Humanity section of the Focolare Movement. In the May issue of *Living City* (Vol. 22, no. 5) we published highlights of this unforgettable event which brought together 20,000 people from many nations and every continent, including 182 representatives from North America. Here we present our readers with an indepth look at the events of that day which not only marked a fundamental moment in the life of the New Humanity Movement, but also offered to all those present a strong sign of hope, the vision of a world founded on the principles of the Gospel, and the account of the efforts of many to bring about its realization.

The day began with a talk by Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement. It offers the dynamic program for the New Humanity Movement.

Pope John Paul II as he arrived in the Sports Arena of Rome in the afternoon of March 20, 1983.

My dear brothers and sisters, my dear friends:

We have come together from every continent on earth to consider the situation of the "New Humanity Movement," the branch of the Focolare Movement which expresses its most human and social dimensions.

We are gathered here so that the ideals which brought the New Humanity Movement into being might be reenkindled in our hearts, in order to seek together an understanding of the path which we should follow and to acquire momentum and courage for the steps ahead.

"Towards a New Humanity" is the title of the gathering which has brought us here today.

"Towards a New Humanity," a New Humanity which we want to believe in and for which we certainly wish to put forth our best efforts.

"Towards a New Humanity."

"New Humanity": a renewed humanity.

Is it possible to speak of a renewed humanity or even just of beginning to move towards a new humanity, today, in our times, in this world in which we live?

Is there anything new in the world around us, anything that calls to mind the image of youthfulness and the radiance of beauty, thus engendering new hope in life?

On the contrary, even if we just take a quick glance at the countenance of humanity in our times we cannot help but note with great sadness that it is marred by traces of licentiousness and evidence of disintegration.

Every day the newspapers, radio and television furnish frightening accounts of these revealing signs.

We know this for a fact: Our world is dominated by political, ideological, military and economic divisions.

Human rights are trampled upon.

Various forms of materialism are spreading.

The people of entire nations are oppressed.

The poorer nations are plagued by misery, hunger and illiteracy. Unemployment, drug abuse, violence and pornography afflict the affluent nations as well.

Political corruption is prevalent everywhere.

Moral values are losing their binding force.

Ever more frightening weapons are being produced and wars continue to break out! Terrorism is always a real threat. Crime is on the rise.

The institution of the family has taken a severe beating.

Women are not always given their rightful place in society.

The misuse of natural resources wreaks serious consequences.

The phenomenon of urbanization crowds millions of people together in inhuman megalopolises.

Materialistic cultures prevail.

Permissive cultures are proliferating.

These are but a few of the alarming signs of the destruction towards which humanity seems to be heading. And generally speaking, these occurrences are given greater prominence than other news events.

In reality, we know that not everything which happens in our world today is negative.

There are men, women, young people, societies, governments, the Catholic Church and other Churches, the faithful of other

". . . when it comes to the immense undertaking of renewing society, of giving it new hope and confidence and offering it genuine, adequate and lasting goods, we are not alone."

religions, and people abounding in goodwill, all of whom employ all their strength to counteract this situation.

Much work is being done on an international level to promote peace in the world.

There is increased commitment to the cause of human rights and a widespread condemnation of oppression.

Efforts are being made to combat hunger and steps are being taken to help the Third World nations, the alienated, the elderly and the handicapped.

On the part of young people, there is a quest for spiritual values and a certain refusal to accept the philosophy of a consumer society. Even the tendency toward excessive permissiveness is now being rejected by many.

Groups are being formed to combat drug addiction and crime.

The ecological movement is spreading rapidly.

Extensive scientific and technological developments coupled with the growth of the mass media have brought previously unheard-of prospects within our reach: They put people in immediate contact with one another, making it possible for them to get to know one another on a world-wide level and to share scientific learning.

In all truth, countless efforts are being made throughout the world, in all fields and in every direction, to remedy the characteristic ills of our society and renew its countenance.

And every worthwhile initiative, no matter where it originates or what its goal may be, every expression of solidarity and brotherhood, even if it is on a purely human level, gives a great and indispensable contribution to our cause.

These are all praiseworthy efforts which our Movement should encourage, take part in and support.

We know, however, that although we may try with the best of intentions, to improve the conditions of mankind and help others with the utmost commitment possible, our efforts are not always successful. The fact of the matter is that notwithstanding all our good intentions, we human beings all too soon experience our personal limitations. Oftentimes, we are prompted, by either internal or external factors, to give in to a sense of indifference, to leave things as they are, and shut ourselves off from the rest of the world, thinking only of ourselves.

Why is this so?

It is because we often believe that we must struggle ahead on our own, and that we can rely only on our own personal resources.

This is where the New Humanity Movement comes into the picture. The specific contribution that it has to offer in every environment in which it is present, and in every nation in which it is at work is this one: to say to the world (and confirm through practical experience) that when it comes to the immense undertaking of renewing society, of giving it new hope and confidence and offering it genuine, adequate and lasting goods, we are not alone.

As we know, our Movement came about because a small group of people, a microcosm of humanity, discovered a "well-spring" and let themselves be imbued by a stream of living water - a new and deeper understanding of the good news: God is Love! God loves us. God loves everyone.

In our lives, even in the particular circumstances of everyday living, with its problems and projects, its sufferings and joys, we are not alone. If we so desire, and if we are open to it, the presence of God, this extraordinary superior presence, can play a role in all that we do, helping in unexpected ways, and enriching and ennobling each and every aspect of our daily lives.

We have a Father: a divine Providence is looking down on us and watching over us.

Certainly, this faith in God's love is present, even today, in the hearts of many.

Nonetheless, oftentimes we fail to perceive the logical consequences of this faith. We lead our lives, building the earthly city and wanting to renew the world, as if we had to do all of this completely on our own.

Our "New Humanity Movement" wants to reenkindle, both in its own members and in as many persons as possible, an awareness of the truth that heaven is on our side and that if we do indeed have a Father (our Father in heaven) he also knows how to give us our "daily bread" along with all that we need[1], as Igino Giordani affirmed.

To give you just one example, one of the strongest convictions that our Movement has developed throughout its forty years of life, a conviction supported by daily experience, is this one: that living in accordance with the Good News and launching the revolution of the Gospel in the world, is synonymous with launching the most powerful social revolution.

Is there social inequality in the world today?

Are the rich and the poor still on opposing fronts?

We believe, like Mary (and through the grace of God we have seen this fulfilled in more than one place on earth) that the law of the Gospel put into practice can truly fill the hungry with good things and send "the rich away with empty hands" (Luke 1:53).

We can attest to the fact that if the beatitude on poverty (cf. Luke 6:20) and Jesus' warning, "Woe to you rich"(Luke 6:24) are taken seriously, they can give a powerful thrust to the restoration of social equality.

Are we now faced with the problems of unemployment, of the elderly, the alienated, the handicapped, the hungry and the many concerns of Third World nations?

Doesn't the entire history of Christianity indicate that the page of the Gospel concerning the "final exam" which will be

View of the Sports Arena in Rome, site of the 1st International Congress of the New Humanity Movement.

"Alongside all those who seek the good of humanity, we want this to be our characteristic contribution to the renewal of the world: to offer an experience of living the Gospel, with all its repercussions on our human, earthly and social life."

given to every Christian, "I was hungry and you gave me food..." (Mt. 25:35) offers us remarkable solutions? Haven't we ourselves also experienced that by putting that page of the Gospel into practice with commitment, in accordance with today's demands and using methods suited to the times, many of these problems can be resolved?

And the "giving" that the Gospel demands ("Give, and it shall be given to you") which guarantees the promise of the "good measure pressed down, shaken together, running over" (Luke 6:38), which our Movement has experienced many times, isn't this also a practical way of acting, capable of relieving those who suffer from poverty, hunger, and loneliness, those who are in need of everything?

It is also our daily experience that in "asking" as the Gospel teaches, we receive (cf. Luke 11:10); that "all these things" (and "these things" could be for some health; for others a job; for still others a house, or a child, or something necessary) "all these things will be given you besides" (Mt. 6:33).

We have often seen with our own eyes, to the glory of God, the "hundred times over" that Christ promised to those who have left everything to follow him (cf. Mt. 19:27). We have counted the "hundred" brothers and sisters, an endless number of brothers and sisters, true brothers and sisters with whom we form one family, with all the spiritual and material consequences that that implies. We have seen the "hundred" houses in various parts of the world where our Movement has spread. Every day we can see with our own eyes the providence of every kind that arrives without fail.

And if it happens here, for the little that we do, through the grace of God, for the little that we love, why can't it happen everywhere?

Is there division in the world? Is the arms race still on? Are there wars and terrorism?

Who can deny that evangelical love of every neighbor lived to the letter, which means love of neighbor as oneself, love of enemy — which is a characteristic of Christianity — the practice of the New Commandment — that precious pearl of the Good News — lived on a vast scale, among all people would be the best antidote for all these terrible troubles and dangers and that it would constitute our best guarantee of peace?

Do we have drug addiction, kidnapping, and theft? Is there pornography and violence?

Why do men and women stoop to such a level?

Because they are seeking pleasure.

We who are trying to live out our Christianity in some way know from long experience that the evangelical adventure of love, of living our lives for others, indeed of "living what the others are living" is the source of immense and pure happiness. Let's help as many people as we can to take delight in that fullness of joy that Jesus has promised. If we do so, many of these sad occurrences will disappear.

What has done more to save and rebuild our families than these words of Christ put into practice: "Let no man separate what God has joined" (Mt. 19:6)?

Haven't we always regarded the image of Mary presented in the Gospel as the noblest of all created beings, as an unparalleled defense of the role of women? Then why can't it be so for many others as well?

Have people lost sight of the fact that they belong to an organized society and therefore share in its rights and responsibilities?

It has been our experience that the observance of the words "Give to Ceasar what is Ceasar's..." (Mt. 22:21) is truly the most effective guarantee that the laws of the state (so long as they are not opposed to the laws of God) will be obeyed.

All this and more makes it hard for us not to think that our human life, frequently so monotonous and difficult, can change course and take wing.

It's not impossible for us to dream of something which few people today dare to admit: that the world can change and that contrary to the evident decadence in many spheres we may be heading towards a new era.

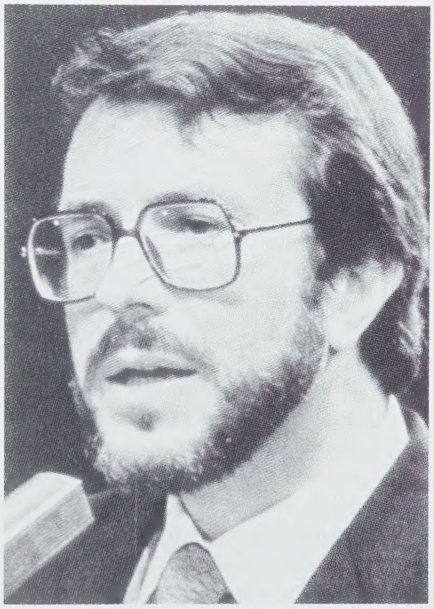
Alongside all those who seek the good of humanity we want this to be our characteristic contribution to the renewal of the world: to offer an experience of living the Gospel, with all its repercussions on our human, earthly and social life. We want to offer this experience in all the nations where we are present: in our homes and offices, in schools, factories and legislatures . . . in

our communities, our meetings, our centers and our towns.

We also want to offer this experience together: We want to cry out with our very being that if love is possible among people like us who come from a variety of nations; people of every race, land and language; if it is possible for harmony, peace and happiness to reign among us, and we are lacking nothing that we need, then why can't it be so for many others as well?

Today we will speak about concrete endeavors. In describing them we will use terms such as labor, unemployment, voluntarism, legislative measures, international law, and so forth...

What we want to affirm at the outset is that if these small-scale endeavors or larger individual or collective experiences contain signs, indications, of a renewed humanity, they are not merely the result of our personal efforts or of the particular talents which some of us may have. Rather, they are the fruit of our wanting to put into practice however much of the Gospel we have come to understand, in that corner of the world where God has placed us. There is a particular truth, a truth of the Gospel, which the Holy Spirit has called to our attention in a special way, even from the beginning of the Movement. It is a truth which we are called upon to fulfill with the utmost commitment. It is the evangelical truth which affirms that wherever we are united in the name of Christ, he is present (cf. Mt. 18:20).



ABOVE: Nillene Pereira Colares, employed by a construction company in Northeast Brasil in the rather delicate position of hiring and discharging personnel, shared how she has tried to be the "voice of the voiceless" in her dealings as mediator between staff and directors. Thanks to her efforts, even at the risk of losing her own job, a new mentality has penetrated the company bringing with it concrete changes.

ABOVE LEFT: Roberto Roche professor of Evolutional Psychology at the University of Barcelona related how the spirituality of unity of the Movement was the starting point for the research work he undertook on the truth about humans and their social relations. It then led to further research in behavioral studies on a team basis.

LEFT: Representatives from Africa and Brasil.

"May this New Humanity Day signify for all of us not just a point of arrival but also a point of departure."

Therefore, he is not only present in the tabernacles of our churches, nor only in the people who have been called to proclaim his message or to govern his Church. No. He is also present among all of us, in the midst of us, his people.

This is the exciting truth which tells us that he did not just pass through the world twenty centuries ago after spending only a few years here. On the contrary, as the Risen Lord, he is present in our midst each time we love one another as he wants, sharing one another's hopes and aspirations, needs, pains, struggles and achievements. He is present in accordance with his astounding promise: "And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20).

Why do we want to stress this particular passage of the Gospel?

Is this presence of Jesus important?

Yes, it is very important. It is essential, especially for us members of the "New Humanity Movement."

We who have been called to build the earthly city must, in a certain sense, continue the work of the Creator.

Now, to whom did the Father look when he created the universe?

The Gospel says:

"In the beginning was the Word; . . . Through him all things came into being . . ." (Jn. 1:1-3).

Through him, through the Word, "all things came into being."

Therefore, the Word had a role to play in creation. In him was the plan of man and creation. The Father admired this plan in the Word when he created the universe[2].

We who want to contribute to the renewal of the world, to whom shall we look for guidance in building the earthly city in a harmonious way and as a continuation of the work of creation?

Who can best enlighten us?

We will turn to Jesus, the Incarnate Word.

And it will be easier to do so if he is present in our midst.

No one will be better able to suggest what we should do, to support us in the work that we have already undertaken, to correct us or give us the courage to start all over again, than Jesus.

But the presence of Jesus in our midst is important for another reason as well.

We know that as human beings we carry within ourselves as an incurable wound, a longing for the supernatural: the divine torments us; the infinite haunts us; and the eternal attracts us.

We know that even if we succeeded in renewing all of humanity, in actually building a new world, our hearts will not yet have attained all that for which they yearn.

Why? Because we have been made for a life that never ends.

Thus we must stress here yet another truth: In building the earthly city, we can begin right now to construct something that will not pass away, because we can contribute to the "new heavens," and the "new earth" (2 Peter 3:13) that await us.

In fact, in redeeming the universe, Christ also redeemed all human activities. Indeed, he has redeemed the works of man as well. The universe will not be annihilated, but rather transformed. There will be no rupture between this world and the next, but a continuity instead.

The good fruits of our human nature and our industriousness (in other words, what we accomplish day after day) will not only not disappear. On the contrary, we will find them again — purified, enlightened and transformed (cf. GS 39).

This is an exalting truth — a consoling and sublime vision of our calling to transform the earth through our own labor.

But this will only come about under one condition: Our works will remain if they have been carried out in this world according to the commandment of love (cf. GS 38).

Now who will guarantee that our work is being carried out in this way? Who will tell us that we are truly building on the rock of love, thus assuring us that what we are doing will not perish?

It will be Jesus in our midst.

Jesus in our midst who raises up every society, great and small, who makes it a cell of the earthly city and of the heavenly city as well . . . He will give us this guarantee. In fact, he is fully present wherever love is alive. His presence is a gift of God and, at the same time, the fruit of our mutual charity, that charity on which we must base all of our activities.

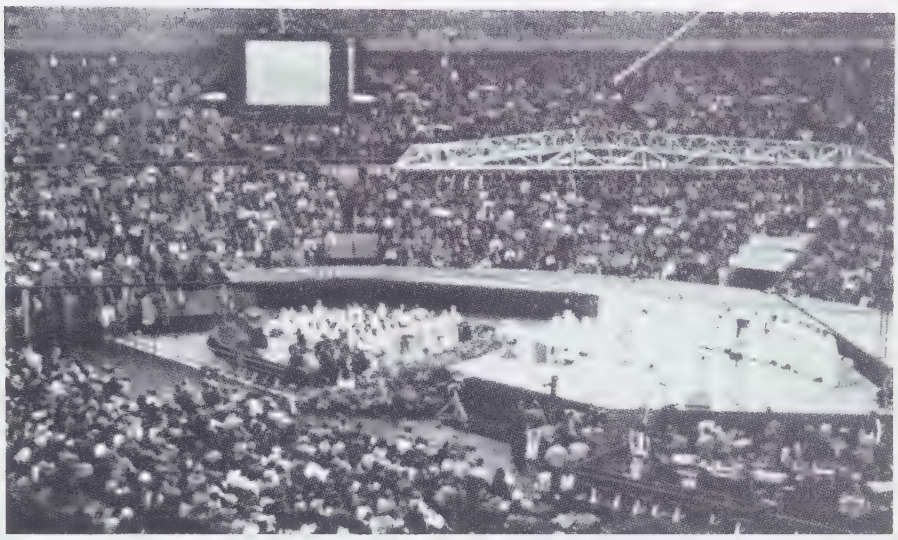
Jesus in the midst! The plan for a new humanity lies in him, therefore, and in him lies the guarantee that what we do will remain.

My dear brothers, sisters and friends:

How can we help but regard the path on which we are walking, the one which stretches out before us, as fascinating? How can we help but think and dream of a New Humanity when we have here with us the one whose Spirit has said: "See, I make all things new!" (Rev. 21:5)?

May this New Humanity Day signify for all of us not just a point of arrival but also a point of departure, because of our new awareness that through this Movement of ours and the spirit which animates it, God has given us a powerful way to give all mankind the hope that we are heading towards what will undoubtedly be — if God wants it and if we want it — the civilization of the year 2000, namely, the "civilization of love."[3]

1) Cf. I. GIORDANI, *Il messaggio sociale del cristianesimo*, Rome 1960, p. 41; cf. ID., *Il messaggio sociale di Gesu'*, Roma, 1951, p. 109-113.
2) Cf. commentary on *Gv. 1,3* in *I Vangeli*, Assisi 1980, p. 1350.
3) The words of Pope Paul VI, cited by Pope John Paul II during a general audience *Osservatore Romano* June 18,1982, p.2.



The morning concluded with Mass concelebrated by Cardinal Opilio Rossi, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and, among others, by Bishop Hemmerle of Aachen in West Germany and Archbishop Zacchi, President of the Pontifical Ecclesiastic Academy (photo above).

"Friends of the New Humanity," the Cardinal said in his homily, "you are at the heart of every human situation, sharing sufferings and alienation, proclaiming through your example of charity and solidarity that love is stronger than hate, that we must hope against hope; that love has conquered death, dissolving the chains of slavery; that we are all brothers and sisters to one another because we are children of the same Father; all called to communion, to unity, in order to build a world which is always more authentically human."

BELOW: 182 representatives from all over North America attended the New Humanity Day.

The day was interspersed with the recounting of concrete endeavors based on the commitment of the members of the New Humanity Movement to live the Gospel in their various fields of activity.

Teresa Ganzon from the Philippines

Changes without violence

Many may be familiar with one of the social problems in the Phillipines, that is, the problem of the ownership of large estates by a few rich families and the existence of masses of destitute tenant farmers and laborers.

In the last decade, laws for reforms and improvement have been passed, but the situation has not changed very much.

Can this be attributed to the poor management sense on the part of the farmers, especially those of the South, the area of the large sugar cane plantations? The fact is that laws alone are not sufficent for eradicating the century old feeling of dependency on the land owners to whom the laborers have a sense of obligation to the point of owing them their vote during political elections.

Teresa and Francis Ganzon, a Phillipine couple in their thirties, were fully aware of this situation when four years ago they were offered the opportunity of undertaking the management of a farm which was going bankrupt. The estate consisted of about 100 acres and was located about 750 miles from Manila. It belonged to Teresa's father, who as a young man, working hard and having good forethought, had even built there a small power plant and a rural bank with the hope that his seven children would one day continue the work started by him. None of them, however, felt attracted to the farm.

Hoping against hope, when the farm needed new management, his expert eye focused on Teresa and her husband; he was sure that they were capable of rescuing it from financial failure. Instead, he as a lawyer, and she as a beginning journalist, felt inexperienced in farm management. Besides, their new born baby girl required a lot of Teresa's time. Nevertheless, out of love for their father, they accepted the job for one year, and dedicated themselves completely to the enterprise. About ten families working on the estate would have become indigent if the farm had failed. The power plant was in financial difficulty and the bank ran the risk of failure because of bad management. This general crisis was now threatening the little bit of security that the farmers had.

Teresa: "We had to take care of three things: the power plant, the bank and the farm. We consulted with all the workers, and together we examined the decisions to be made. Then we submitted everything to my father, trusting his experience. He agreed with our plans.

"Francis, a Southerner himself, began to develop an interest in the project, and considered staying on the farm beyond the one year agreed upon. I, instead, had some reservations, thinking that the day the estate would be divided among all seven children, my husband and I would have to start all over again in our respective professions. My father, who loved his estate, proposed to give

us a piece of land as a certain economic guarantee if we did remain there. Otherwise he would have had to sell everything.

"This new experience brought us to concrete confrontation with the social problems for which we had fought during the student riots at the university. Having started to live the Gospel, we were now able to see things in a different light and with a greater sense of responsibility.

"We were being challenged to work for social justice and to engage ourselves, together with the poverty striken, in a nonviolent, but radical struggle against fatalism. We accepted the challenge, hoping also to set an example for others.

"The first step was to give each worker adequate compensation for services rendered; we then asked for everyone's personal participation in the management, rather than passive dependency. Often we gathered at night to discuss the problems of the farm; for us it was a concrete means of learning about farming, and for the employees it was was an absolute innovation to be able to express their opinions about the affairs of the enterprise. We kept insisting that we were like a family, and that whatever anyone did brought good or bad consequences on all the others. We tried to make sure that each one understood and appreciated the work of the others and that the diversity of tasks would not bring about the traditional divisions among technicians, administrators and manual laborers.

"The advantage of this type of cooperation was soon evident. Since the mango plantation wasn't too profitable, we concentrated on the raising of hogs to be sold to meat markets. Francis had the idea of starting a chicken farm too.

"At a certain point my father was experiencing financial difficulties in his other businesses and was considering selling the farm. By this time my husband and I had decided to remain with the enterprise and we asked if we could buy from him the part of the land used for livestock facilities and living quarters. With our deal and the sale of the rest of the estate to another buyer, my father solved his problem. For the purchase we asked for a bank loan; we studied a plan to increase the profit of the farm in order to pay it back. In these circumstances we saw the fruit of having placed confidence in the workers for they cooperated to their fullest potential.

"Along with the difficulties of farm management, community and family problems arose as well. The fact that Francis was also a Southener and spoke the workers' dialect was fundamental in resolving them. They felt he was really one of them. We could not expect those people to change their mentality overnight. We accepted them as they were, shared the money with them without blmaing them for the way they used it. Then gradually we were able to give some advice, Francis to the men and I to the women. We helped them to start new projects: for instance vegetable gardens and poultry-raising for their consumption to reduce the cost of food. We also encouraged them to pasture cattle for people who lived in the city and could not take care of their animals. For this kind of labor, in our country, farmers are given half

Teresa Ganzon (top) related the experience of taking over the management of a farm thus ensuring the security of the ten families of farmers living on the estate. One of the activities of the farm is hog raising (bottom photo).

of the proceeds from the sale of the meat. As a result our workers developed a greater ability to handle their family budgets.

"Later we organized ourselves to buy at wholesale prices the provisions needed by the community and to resellthem at very low prices, making just enough money to pay a person to handle

the merchandise and a little extra to put aside toward the establishment of a real cooperative. This was truly a 'revolutionary' step in our environment because in this kind of operation the laborers are usually charged so much that they remain indebted for generations.

"Today the farm employs forty-five people; there are twenty-four families and about seventy chilren. In our meetings we also talk about family planning and responsible parenthood in accordance with the teachings of the Church. New initiatives keep developing. Some housewives have started increasing their income by preparing and selling meals and snacks to workers in town.

"We are getting closer to the day in which co-ownership of the estate will be possible. Our goal is to work for human development toward an autonomy which may permit people even to leave the farm if they choose to do another kind of work.

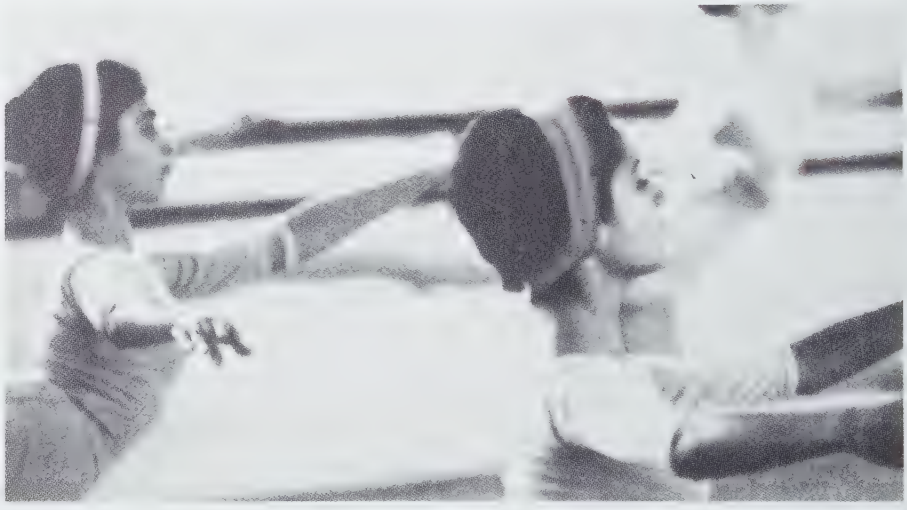
"The children attend public school. We encourage them to continue their studies after high school. Thie year, for instance, one of the boys completed his professional studies in evening classes for which he himself paid. For the future we hope for our own modern private school for these children. Friends in Manila are already working on this project.

"Once we pay for the land, it seems logical to us that it should belong to all those who work for it —farmers and office workers alike.

"As do many other young people, we too fight for social justice, but we want to change the structures without resorting to violent means."

Liliana Cosi from Italy

Art that does not pass away



I met the Focolare Movement just at the moment when I had reached a turning point in my career as a prima ballerina. At the time, I was being sent from the Scala in Milan to the Bolshoi in Moscow where I was to later give numerous performances as a guest artist.

I was deeply struck by something Chiara Lubich had once said: "Art is knowing how to instill in a painting or a musical composition something of that which is immortal in the soul. . .. An artist is perhaps the closest thing to a saint, because if what makes a saint so wondrous is the ability to give God to the world, the artist is one who, in a certain sense, gives others the most beautiful thing on earth: the human soul."

These words gave profound meaning to my life. Taking them to heart, I continued my career in classical ballet performing in many theaters all over the world.

I drew new strength and fresh inspiration from the Movement's spirituality which is so deeply rooted in the Gospel. Above all, I learned to appreciate the value of suffering which, when it is loved, reveals itself as a doorway leading to what is absolute, to beauty itself. In fact, it is precisely this beauty which the artist must unleash in the world because beauty is the one and only thing capable of inspiring works of art that do not pass away.

With two other dancers who shared my desire to offer today's youth this love for a new art, and a true beauty, I established a school of ballet just five years ago. At present we have 170 students from many different nations. We would like to instill something "of that which is immortal in the soul" in these students and in our artistic productions. To date, we have given more than 500 shows in Italy and abroad.

Caterina Galletta from Italy

Overcoming a handicap

"I was born a spastic and spent the first years of my life in Sicily where my family and friends had no hope of my living a normal life like other girls of my age. And yet I was always convinced that I, too, was capable of making a contribution to society, and for that reason I insisted on attending elementary school and junior high.

I was already an adult when I completed high school, receiving a diploma which enabled me to look for work. I would then be able to support myself and give some help to my family.

Finally, after years of waiting in which I was constantly looking for work, I was employed by the school district and sent to a business school as a cleaning lady.

When I went for the interview, the principal made a list of all the duties I would have there, and he seemed convinced that I would never be able to do all that was required. He concluded by saying that I could just as well leave. After a moment of uncertainty, I gathered together all my strength and told him firmly, "Yes, I could easily go home, but I believe that I have work to do here." The Personnel Director understood my situation and created a job for me: it was to sit at a table and regulate the traffic of the students through the corridors.

I realized immediately that this was not the right job for me, and so I tried on my own to see where I could really be of assistance. I felt rebellious and as this feeling grew stronger, I began to see that I had two alternatives: I could either leave the job or else refuse to give up. I chose the second alternative, and I took every opportunity to learn more about my specific duties: to distribute record sheets and stationery supplies, to get to know the students, to keep track of the keys, to answer the telephone.

Once I transferred a call to the principal who hung up on me because he said he couldn't understand what I was saying. That whole period was very difficult. What gave me the strength was the awareness that I am a child of God like everyone else. I received a lot of moral support from the people of the Movement with whom I had a very strong unity. I welcomed the suffering that came to me and made every effort to transform it into love. In this way, I felt that I, too, could give a contribution to the creation of a new type of society. I really believed this.

I kept on trying to be of service to everyone. In particular, I established relationships with the young people. At the beginning, they didn't know how to relate to me, perhaps because they had never had close contact with someone with a handicap. I kept trying to overcome this barrier and while this helped me to feel free, it also freed them to have an open relationship with me.

In this way, the atmosphere around me began to change. Both the other employees and the teachers gradually realized that I was able to perform my duties well, even though I had such great and obvious difficulties.

In time, I found myself right at home in that school. I was a person like all the others. Even the principal began to treat me politely. Sometimes when he met me in the corridor he would say something very nice with a big smile, and call me 'my dear Caterina'.

The school then began to take in some severly handicapped students who had great difficulty relating to the others. At the beginning their presence in the school created situations that I was afraid I could not handle. I was hindered in my relationship with them until I understood that we shared a special bond, and that this could help me to understand them even better. This thought urged me on and helped me to be more attentive to their needs.

I have understood that when I try hard not to avoid difficulties, but rather to face them with tranquility, I find a deep peace that allows me to overcome every obstacle and create constructive relationships.

This experience has shown me that it is possible to overcome difficulties without letting them rule your life.

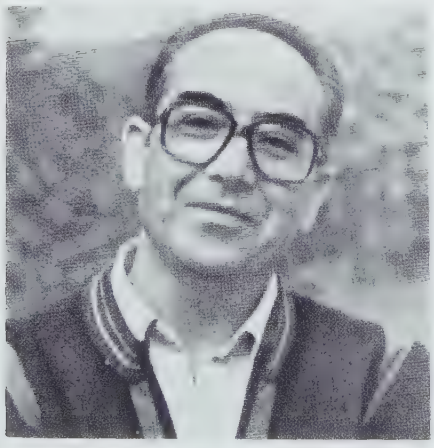
Domenico Mangano from Italy

Towards the rehabilitation of prisoners

One of the people who shared experiences on stage was Domenico Mangano, 45 years old, a town-councillor in the central part of Italy. He spoke about a project which he is undertaking with a group from the New Humanity Movement and others for the rehabilitation of prisoners.

At the conclusion of the New Humanity Day we interviewed him to get additional information on the project.

"Everything started 'by chance' in 1973, although nothing really happens by chance in the eyes of those who believe in God. On my job I had to deal with social security for prisoners and I had a hard time obtaining the data needed for paper work. The best way to solve my problem, as suggested by the prison chaplain, was to become a volunteer social worker in the correctional facilities. This brought me in contact with the 'least' towards whom the Gospel urges us to go. My excuse for meeting them was to secure social security information from them, but very seldom did my relationship end with that issue."



"I think that one of the greatest obstacles in a prison is prejudice — the mentality which fosters the idea that a prisoner is someone dangerous and must be kept on the outskirts of society. The rehabilitation program for the prisoners in Italy is perhaps one of the most advanced in all of Europe. In fact, it includes a transition period of semi-freedom before the final release. During this period the prisoners are supposed to begin working outside, but under close supervision. Unfortunately, this particular aspect is more theory than practice. Why is this so? In my opinion, the legislators made the mistake of believing that once the law was passed, private businesses and governmental agencies would cooperate by providing jobs. Instead, it has not happened, not only because in our country there is a high percentage of unemployment, but also and especially because of a lack of social awareness of the problem.

"In 1974 those of us who did voluntary work within the prison in our city were few: one of us was teaching; another one, an educator, handled psychological problems; a retired governmental official took care of legal matters. Later, other people began supporting us and helping us from the outside, performing the essential task of building a bridge between the prisoners and their family members. Thanks to these volunteers, a program, in agreement with the ideas of the chaplain, was developed for helping relatives who had to undertake long trips and many difficulties in order to visit inmates."

"Three episodes occurred which made us double our efforts to enforce the law concerning the period of semi-freedom, especially for those who had had many years of detention. One prisoner was granted a reprieve, after twenty-five years in jail, because of his good conduct. We had tried to prepare him for the impact with the outside world; yet so great was his anguish in finding himself in a world so different from the one he had left and the one he had come to know through newspapers and television, that he had a heart attack.

"A second prisoner was an elderly man with great wisdom—wisdom acquired, as strange as it may seem, through relationships established during his thirty years of detention. In the nursing home where he was placed he didn't find that support and those friendships which he was accustomed to in jail. He too was stricken with a heart attack.

"A third man, instead became ill and so lonely after his release that he decided it was better to return to prison; this he managed to do by beating up a policeman.

"Another difficulty was that of overcoming the stigma of a criminal record when confronting job placement. "What could we do? At a certain point we approached

some local authorities and social agencies in order to interest them in the issue. Many of them became involved: judges, politicians of all parties, officials of the department of labor, correctional officers. We all worked and succeeded in getting the local government to approve a special project which enables prisoners preparing for release to work as railroad laborers in groups with regular employees. Naturally it is not stable employment; there is no work contract; there is just an agreement. Presently three prisoners are working in this experiment.

"In my opinion, on account of little or incorrect information, the public has not reacted to this initiative in the right way, unfortunately. People didn't understand its nature as being one of implementing prison reform and being supportive of the prisoners. There is still a lot to be done in order to change a certain mentality. For a few years now, at Christmas, we have successfully encouraged the city's school children to write letters to prisoners and prison authorities about views on problems evolving from incarceration.
Last December we also organized an exhibition and sale of handicrafts made by prisoners. About 2,000 elementary and high school students, together with their parents, visited it. It is a more direct method than that used by newspapers to attain the involvement of the entire city, although we are aware of the fact that there would be additional ways of securing the public's interest and cooperation.

"In May of 1982 we oganized a round table discussion in the presence of a high official of the Justice Department who stated that our experiment was the first example in Italy of collaboration between local authorities and prisons. Last September we finally presented our project to the National Congress of Social Assistance to Prisoners to have it extended throughout Italy, and we hope to have it eventually proposed and passed as new national legislation. Meanwhile, other local authorities have begun to follow our example.

"Now we are preparing a convention open to all those who are interested in this problem in order to offer them our experience. We want to speak more about what we have received from prisoners rather than what we have done for them. Obviously, the groups we can influence seem always too small, but isn't it from a small seed that a plant is born?"

Elvira de Martinez from Tucuman, Argentina

From each house build a house

After my husband had died and my seven children were married, I could have sat back to live in a comfortable position without financial worries. And yet at the age of 60 I read the Pope's Encyclical "The Progress of Peoples" and it changed my whole life.

I had the impression that a heavy veil fell away from my eyes and I understood how far my middle class way of life was from the demands of Christ's message.

I called all my children and read them the most important parts of the encyclical. After a moment of silence the youngest one said, "Does it mean that this is superfluous too?" and he pointed to our precious china and the expensive glasses which were part of my large crystal collection. I answered immediately, "Of course! What would you think if we sold them and used the money to build a house for someone who doesn't have one?" My children agreed.

Three months later I met the Focolare Movement. Its spirituality had a powerful impact on me. It was as if God in his love wanted to show me which spirit should animate my project. He was giving me the secret of how to overcome every obstacle.

I spoke to many friends and their families about my ideas and with their help and that of a priest who was also interested in the project, I began to spread the message of the encyclical to as many people as I could.

The effect was beyond all our expectations. People were startled by this message and began giving their most precious possessions. Many women gave me their rings, necklaces, jewelry of all kinds. A young wife gave a valuable tablecloth of quality Spanish lace which had been a wedding present. Another woman who is an international golf champion gave all her treasured silver cups. All these things went toward our project to "Build a House" for those who had none.

ABOVE: Elvira de Martinez (right) promoter of the "Caritas pro vivienda." Her initiative in Tucuman developed (among other things) into the construction of houses for the poor (above right).

We collaborated with Caritas but we were left completely free to follow our own initiatives and we used the name "Help Toward a House." It is an organization that has no equal in Argentina. We are firmly convinced that the development of the human person is closely linked to the type of housing that is provided.

With the money collected from all over the city — with raffles, auctions, and organized collections — we were able to give a home to 38 families. Precedence was given to the poorest families and to those with many children. People who receive a house pay a monthly rent based on their family income (never more than 10 per cent). As soon as the money collected through rents is enough to build another house, we do it. "From each house build another house" is the motto of our project. It has set off a chain reaction even among the poorest people. If handled well, it could go on endlessly.

The houses we build have only the basic structure. They are made of brick with cement floors, wooden beams and a tin roof — just what is essential to keep out the rain and to provide sanitary living conditions. They measure about 50 square meters and include a kitchen with dining area, three bedrooms and a bathroom. They provide adequate area for the family to be together as well as a certain amount of privacy for each individual in the family. The house is surrounded by another 200 square meters of land to be used as a yard and vegetable garden.

The houses are assigned when the basic structure is completed. The final touches, as for example the doors and woodwork inside the house, are left to the initiative of the tenants who complete the house in the way they can or want. In this way every house has its own personality.

Our project expanded with time and we studied new techniques and organized the construction of entire neighborhoods. With contributions received from the city of Tucuman alone, 179 houses were built in three neighborhoods.

To give people a home is a great thing, but it is obviously not everything. The "Progress of Peoples" urges us to reach "not only all people but also the whole person." Therefore at the same time as the houses were being built, "community centers" grew up in each one of these neighborhoods. There is a school to teach adults reading and writing, and courses are offered in masonry, carpentry, sewing, cooking, etc.

There are also clinics in each area and rooms where social workers help the people, as individuals and as families, in their social adjustment. Other professionals also volunteer their time and services. For the division of lots, the opening and paving of roads and so on, the city and the army helped in many ways. At the end of 1979, the Minister for the Treasury of the Province of Tucuman was present at the opening of the third new neighborhood. With his help, the approval of the governor of the Province and the president of one of the leading banks of Tucuman, a procedure was begun to reform the bylaws of the bank. It was decided that 30 per cent of the profits would be assigned for the construction of houses for the poorest people, through intermediary bodies, without goal of profit. It was also planned to allow twenty year loans without interest with the possibility of extending the limit to thirty years. With the help of the bank it became possible to begin immediately to build a fourth neighborhood with 241 living quarters and then a fifth.

Perhaps for the first time in the history of our country, capital was placed at the service of the neediest, not the wealthiest.

The National Minister for Public Works visited the area and then the United Nations Officer for the Latin American Economic Commission. The latter was impressed by two things: the results obtained using only funding and capital from the city itself, and the fact that the tenants themselves complete the work on their own homes. He said, "This housing project speaks for itself. It is the solution to a problem which can be found everywhere in the world. By doing something about it you have shown that something can be done."

Vandi de Araujo and Severino Justino from Brazil

From Hell's Island to St. Therese's Island

When members of the Focolare Movement first went to Recife, Brazil, the bishop there, whose name was Helder Camara, asked them to take care of one area in particular. Near the center of the city, in an area that is periodically flooded, there were about 600 families (a total of 4,000 people) living in very confined quarters. Because of the terrible poverty, violence and social isolation of these people, this area came to be known as "Hell's Island."

Although it was a dangerous and difficult place to live, some focolarine took a shack there and began to live among these people. They started a sewing school and set up a clinic.

When the flood season came, many of the people made absolutely no attempt to escape and just stayed where they were, waiting to drown. The focolarine were able to convince them all to leave the area and to accept the help of the soldiers who had come to rescue them. They were given food and lodging in schools and public buildings that the state put at their disposal. However, another problem arose, because although they were being fed, they were doing nothing for themselves and, as a consequence, began to depend on the state for everything.

They were finally convinced to leave these shelters and return to their impoverished homes, relying on Divine Providence that never let them down. The people of the Movement continued to help them. Some came from Italy just for this purpose, others were Brazilians who moved to the island to work on behalf of the people there.

Vandi de Araujo and Severino Justino who are from that area can tell you the rest.

Vandi: "I am a widow and have seven children. I come from "Hell's Island" which is now called "St. Therese's Island."

It is difficult to describe the terrible poverty we lived in, without food or jobs. There was a total lack of sanitation and a high disease rate. All of this just caused us to become depressed and discouraged, and made us feel more and more strongly that we were inferior to, and rejected by, the rest of society.

Fifteen years ago, some people of the Focolare Movement came to live with us. They didn't come to bring us material goods, but just to be with us, to share our life. They went to get water like we did and we worked together at all the household chores. When they came to visit me I wouldn't let them in because I was ashamed of the condition in which I lived. My third child was practically dying of dehydration and I could do nothing about it. My husband Francesco was unemployed. We didn't even have a chair to sit on and besides, I thought, these people considered themselves better than the rest of us.

One day those women managed to catch me off-guard and they came into my house. I realized that they were very different from what I had thought. One of them started to fix dinner and the other to wash the clothes. They found a way to get medicine for my baby.

We became close after that, and my husband and I felt a desire to live the Gospel. We realized that we had never been married nor had the children been baptized. We received these sacraments and the grace of God came into our home. We began to live in a spirit of love. In contact with members of the Movement, we felt a new strength that came from God and everything began to improve. Francesco found work as a barber and I, too, began to help out by making things at home. We put ourselves at the service of the community and we took part in all the projects that were organized.

Once there was a flood that filled the houses with mud. The people of the Movement did all they could to help us out. Later they built a house near their carpentry shop and we moved there. After learning carpentry, Francesco found work in a factory. Then things began to look up for us.

Once during this period Francesco wrote in his diary: "It makes me suffer to think about men because instead of trying to fulfill themselves in the image and likeness of God, they look for happiness in pleasure and possessions." Because of his aptitude and his ability, he was very soon made the supervisor of his department and began to

LEFT and ABOVE: Recife, Brazil, the Island of St. Therese. Work is underway on the construction of houses for the poor and homeless.

earn a very high salary. However this created a spiritual dilemma for him. He could now have all that the consumer society was offering him, and yet he was afraid of losing the evangelical outlook that we had acquired and which had transformed him to the point of making him and us feel especially loved by God.

Francesco died in an accident; God called him home, but he left us this spiritual testament: A person becomes fulfilled not by possessing many things, but rather by giving to others, by living in love.

Although I suffered deeply when he died, I felt that I had to offer him to God with joy. I did so even though it cost me a lot, and I was certain that God, who is a Father, would help me to raise our seven children, that he, in fact, would be their Father.

Francesco had been nicknamed "Nobody," but after acquiring self-respect he composed a song that I would like to sing for you now:

I have nothing written across
my forehead
To tell you who I am.
I know that I am equal to the
others, and that I, too,
live in the world.
You who know me
Call me "Nobody"
And yet I have found the truth.
Someone looked at me,
And gave me happiness. . .
What difference does it make
If everyone despises me?
My name now
Speaks of life without end;
In this world, those who have
never suffered
Do not know the value of love;
Suffering is something great
I won't complain.
It's all in the past now.
"Nobody" doesn't exist
anymore. . .
Now He alone exists.

Severino: There were many people on the island like Francesco and his family who began to give of themselves and discover the values of the Gospel. In this way a community came to life in which people discovered the strength of unity.

For example, when I became part of this community — after I had begun to live the Gospel — I felt a deep peace and joy within. I had never known how important it is to do things for other people without expecting anything in return. Only by living in this way so new to me did I discover that it is more important to give than to receive. By continually trying to live in this way with others I've given God his rightful place in my life, in my family, everywhere. With his light and the strength of unity, we were able to assume responsibiltiy for ourselves and to search for solutions to our problems together. We formed an association, which was later legally recognized, in order to defend our human rights. We

ABOVE: Rosalyn Richardson of New York shared her experience as a teacher in a Brooklyn school. RIGHT: A view of Fontem, in the Cameroons, one of several little cities of the Focolare Movement.

elected a council which operates on an "evangelical basis" — giving priority to mutual love, and service to those in need.

I have been living on the island for twenty years, and I can truly say that I could never have imagined that we would be doing what we are doing now. Previously each one of us would try to solve his or her own problems, and no one worried about anyone else. The municipal authorities at one time wanted to build office buildings on a certain section of the island, crowding us into a much smaller area and thus making us worse off than we already were. We called a general meeting of the community so that together we could stand up for our rights before the government.

At the beginning of this meeting we made certain that we were loving one another, without judging, offending or attacking anyone. Then our council met with the civil authorities and presented them with a proposal that took the needs of everyone into consideration. Thus the need to move the families was averted.

We needed to build a dam to keep the flood waters back, and everyone worked on it and whenever possible. People even donated the materials to construct it. In order to build up the terrain where the houses are located so that they would be safe, we needed tons of earth. We didn't even have a cent, but we trusted in divine providence. We started by putting our own money together and then we formed a commission that was able to get truckloads of earth and sand from the government.

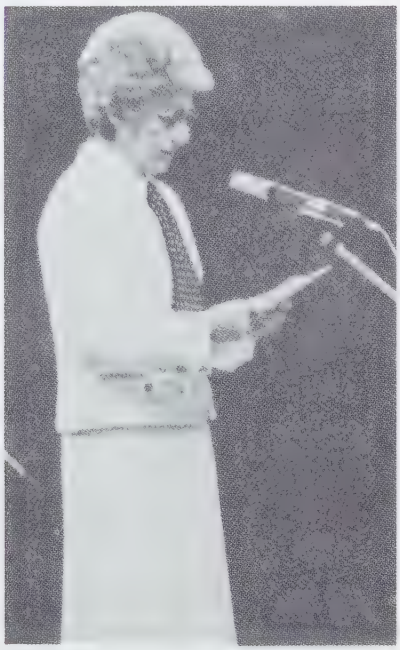
When the trucks arrived everyone helped to spread the soil on the streets. Those who had wheelbarrows or hoes shared them with others. One family even knocked down the fence in front of their house to make room for the trucks.

In our community newsletter we wrote an article noting all that was given with generosity — time, hard work, money, equipment, ideas and so on; then we stated all that we received, including a tractor and a truck which were put at our disposal. We really saw the truth of the sentence from the Gospel: "Give and it shall be given to you."

We then planned to build small canals in every section of the island which would drain the water from the houses and make it flow into the sea. Everyone helped to do this.

All of this activity drew attention from the civil authorities who were thus convinced that our community had the right to remain where it was due to our many years of residence there.

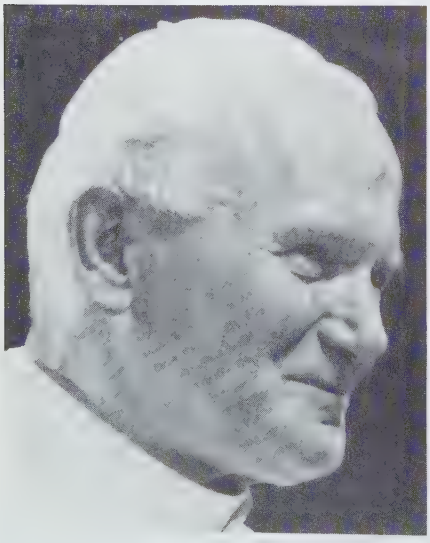
Our experience is now of interest to other communities like ours, who ask us for information on how to resolve similar types of problems. The solution we offer them comes from living the Gospel which leads us to receive the 'hundredfold" here on earth.



At six in the evening the day reached its climax when the Holy Father entered the Sports Arena where the gathering was being held and was welcomed by enthusiastic applause.

Before he addressed the attentive audience, Chiara Lubich briefly presented to him the purpose and structure of the New Humanity Movement, "composed" as she said, "of representatives of every human condition; they belong to all different social categories and work in a wide variety of occupations. . .

"Their commitment in the Movement is that of giving a Christian soul to our present-day society, contributing in this way to a renewal of both people and structures. In particular they wish to bear witness, with their lives, and demonstrate with concrete examples to the world around, the powerful incidence of the Gospel even on the most earthly aspects of individual and social life: in other words the contribution that the word of God, when it is put into practice, can offer in building the 'earthly city'."



The Gospel is life for souls and all of society.

The Holy Father gave the following address to members of the New Humanity Movement.

Beloved brothers and sisters!

I express to all of you my joy at being here today, among you who offer such a vibrant and convincing image of the Church, and of that authentic interpersonal communion which, even in the multiplicity of the origins and social conditions of its members, it allows to be experienced "Behold how good it is and how pleasant, when brethren dwell at one!" (Ps. 133:1), since the promise of Jesus is certain: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst" (Mt. 18:20). And I know that all of you, all of us here present, are gathered in his name.

Therefore let us make room for him, for his mysterious and comforting presence, for his Spirit of truth and of strength, who unites us all in a single bond of faith and love.

Above all I want to thank Miss Chiara Lubich for the remarks addressed to me in the name of all of you, and I express to her my deep satisfaction for the providential growth of the Focolare Movement, not only in size but above all in intensity.

At the same time, I express a heartfelt greeting to all of you who have come to Rome, the See of Peter, in such large numbers. In the variety of geographical origins is reflected the universality of the Church, which is present in all the latitudes with an inexhaustible and always appealing urge to overcome all natural and historical barriers. And in the extreme diversity of your professions—since you represent the most varied social categories—the Church's genuine brotherhood is evidenced, in which, as the Apostle Paul authoritatively states, "There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

I am especially happy to make contact with the "New Humanity Movement" represented by you. It's aim of giving a Christian soul to all levels of modern society, contributing to the renewal of men and structures, cannot but meet with my approval and my encouragement. In fact, the initiative of life-giving love, originating from the heavenly Father and culminating in Jesus Christ, must spread and as it were overflow into universal dimensions to involve all mankind in a new creation, in a true "rebirth" (Tit. 3:5; Mt. 19:28). Is there perhaps an ideal that is greater, more exciting, more divine and at the same time more human?

It is precisely about this project, which one could call utopic if it had not been conceived by the salvific will of God himself, that I would like to offer a few considerations.

The Letter to the Ephesians opens with these solemn and exultant words: "Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens. . . he predestined us through Jesus Christ to be his adopted sons. . ." (Eph. 1:3-5).

God-Love wanted to establish with man a relationship of Father to Son. For this reason he intervenes in his history, individual and collective, in various ways. A particular mode of presence is the pact which he entered into with Israel, freeing it from oppression and constituting it as a people. This fatherhood towards Israel is like a sign of the broader and very real fatherhood which he intends to demonstrate to all of humanity and which he manifests fully in the gift which he makes to us of his Son: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn. 3:16).

It is a solicitous Father, who is revealed, a Father who is not interested only in our spiritual salvation; he, who clothes the lilies of the field and looks after the fate of the smallest among the birds (cf. Mt. 6:26-29) also takes care of man's daily material problems (Cf. Mt. 6:31-34).

This universal divine fatherhood is further specified in the relationship to the baptized, inasmuch as they, by sharing in the one and incomparable sonship of Jesus (cf. Gal. 4:1-7; Col. 1:13), truly become by new title children of God (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1). Since Christ is "first-born of many brothers" (Rom. 8:29), it derives from this that all those who are a part of him find that they are brethren

The Holy Father was presented with some of the typical expressions of the New Humanity Movement, among them, Loppiano, a small city which embodies a concrete expression of a society founded on the Gospel.

"The Gospel is not truly lived if it does not produce in the followers of Christ a radical change in their way of living in the concrete reality of society."

among themselves (cf. Mt. 23:8), and what is more, they are under a new requirement of love with regard to all men (cf. Mt. 5:43-48).

The Gospel, therefore, is not only news which concerns the relationship between God and man, but it also concerns the relationships of men among themselves. Alongside and declared to be like the commandment to love God with all one's heart is that of loving one's neighbor as oneself (cf. Mt. 22:39). It is a love which must be realized in a mutual exchange and which goes beyond every human measure. Jesus asks us to forgive and love our enemies, placing before us as a model the Father's perfection (cf. Mt. 5:48); As a measure of mutual love between brethren, Jesus points out to us his own love which led him to give his life: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn. 15:12-13).

The Gospel, therefore, does not proclaim a reality which remains intimately locked in the souls of believers, but is translated immediately into the radical transformation of their interpersonal relationships, into a renewal of the network of social relations. The Gospel is not truly lived if it does not produce in the followers of Christ a radical change in their way of living in the concrete reality of society.

In revealing to man his divine sonship, the Gospel also reveals to man the response he must give to the Father's love in order to live as a son. This response is twofold, to God himself and to other men.

The first response, to the Father, says what it means to live as a son, how to behave in such a way that the Father's goodness is manifested in the life of his children. "Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness" (Mt. 6:33); then the Father's love will give his children a hundredfold and life eternal (cf. Mk. 10:29-30).

The second response is to one's brother, with whom Jesus himself is identified (cf. Mt. 25:31-46). It is a response for which Christ points out many ways for us to practice; however, his words bring all these ways to the central one which is the new commandment, the condition that unity, which is the essence of the Gospel (cf. Paul VI, *Insegnamenti, XI, 1973, p.57),* be lived among men.

"The Lord Jesus, when he prayed to the Father, 'that all may be one . . . as we are one' (Jn. 17:21-22), opened up vistas closed to human reason. For he implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and in the union of God's sons in truth and charity" *(Gaudium et Spes, 24).*

The fatherhood of God, which is revealed to us and shared with us by Christ in the Spirit, is the relationship itself between the Father and the Son. Then, the gift of the Father, which is made to us in Christ, requires that all of human life, including the profound structure of the social relationship, reach out toward its source and toward its duty to be, which is the very life of the Trinity. Christ assumed humanity and its true condition, except sin. In doing this he himself united the immanent and the transcendent vocation of all men. The Fathers of the Church often repeated: "Whatever is not assumed (by Christ) is not saved" (St. Gregory Nazianzus, Ep. 3, *to Cledonius):* the social relationship is assumed —and saved—by Christ in his Mystical Body.

The challenge for the Christian therefore is to translate this "redeemed sociality" in all the dimensions of human life, as the first Christians did. In the midst of the society in which they lived, they brought and demonstrated a new lifestyle, an authentic brotherly solidarity, a new type of society, a community in which the trinitarian roots of human coexistence acted.

To be faithful to their vocation, the followers of Christ must give concrete proof that the Gospel is life both for souls and for the whole of society. The communion of the faithful in the Spirit must take shape in a community such that, in breaking the one Bread of Life, it also shares the bread of the land, acting with concrete forms of incorporation, according to the social and cultural conditions in which the Christians live. As a consequence, will not the unity lived as the Mystical Body of Christ perhaps make of Christians those who reveal and evidence that type of solidarity only through which a true social body can be had?

The free articulation of the many according to the entire breadth of human expressions, but in the

Two examples of the concrete endeavors undertaken by members of the New Humanity Movement were also presented to the Pope and were accompanied by a slide presentation. One was recounted by Vandi de Araujo (photo at right) and Severino Justino who had come from Brasil for the Congress (see page 17).

The second was related by a group from Lebanon. They shared their efforts for the promotion of peace in their war-torn country. Among them was Charles (photo below) who was crippled in the fighting in his country, "Today," he said, "I want to communicate to each one of you my discovery: God is love and peace."

sphere of the one body of Christ, brilliantly demonstrates the possibility for the most profound peace in civil and international society.

Charity, which firmly joins the members of the Body of Christ, modelled after the measure of the merciful love of God, cannot but point out the most just and most fruitful mechanisms for the dialogue of peace.

In the light of the universality of the Christian vocation (cf. Gal. 3:28) the commandment of love thus extends to the community of peoples, making it possible to love not only one's homeland, but also the very identity of others as one's own.

The free sharing of goods among the members of the Christian community, where it is practiced according to the Gospel, will effectively demonstrate the possibility of sharing the goods of the earth on the part of all the members of the political community on a national and international level; in this way a contribution will be made to find those "mechanisms and instruments of *authentic participation in the economic and social fields, with the possibility offered to everyone to have access to the goods of the earth*, with the possibility to *fulfill oneself in work;* in a word, with the application of the social doctrine of the Church," as I said in my recent journey to Central America (Homily of the Mass celebrated at the Metro Center of San Salvador, March 6, 1983, no.7).

The complete fulfillment of man who has become a member of the Body of Christ then becomes a model for the recognition of the dignity of man, with his rights and his duties, within the social body.

But this project is already made concrete in Mary Most Holy, and she herself gives it to us, in the Holy Spirit, as the Magna Charta. In particular, "the Magnificat is the mirror of Mary's soul. The spirituality of Yahweh's

"In communion with the whole Church and with its lawful pastors, you must hold high the light of the Gospel, like a city on a mountain top, like a lamp on a stand."

poor and the prophetic nature of the Old Covenant culminate in this canticle. It is the song which proclaims the new Gospel of Christ, it is the prelude to the Sermon on the Mount. Mary here shows herself to us empty of herself, placing all her confidence in the mercy of the Father. In the Magnificat she presents herself as a model 'for those who do not accept passively the adverse circumstances of personal and social life', and are not victims of 'alienation', as is said today, but who with her proclaim that God is 'the avenger of the humble' and, if necessary, 'puts down the mighty from their thrones. . .' " (John Paul II, Discourse at the Sanctuary of Zapopan, Mexico, no. 4, January 30, 1979: *AAS LXXI,* 1979, p. 230).

Beloved brothers and sisters! You and your Movement are called in a special way to give this incisive witness. In communion with the whole Church and with its lawful pastors, you must hold high the light of the Gospel, like a city on a mountain top, like a lamp on a stand (cf. Mt. 5:14-15). May you always maintain unchanged the enthusiasm of your commitment, constantly joining to it the humility of one who knows that whoever sows does not always reap and that, instead, the one who has the holy fortune to reap often depends on a sowing done by others, as the Lord appropriately reminds us (cf. Jn. 4:36-38).

Therefore give to the Church a healthy example of incessant listening to the Word of God, of prayer, of mutual communion, of spriritual joy, of profound respect for other's charisms, of harmonious and fruitful participation in the great unity of the Body of Christ, in short, of authentic Christian maturity.

I have seen from the program of your works that you have spent a very intense day. Above all, the multiplicity of the comments which have followed one another have touched a very wide range of problems, spheres, situations, where it is necessary to plant the transforming seed of the Gospel. Who knows how many stimuli you have received, how many proposals you have formulated, what generous availability you have renewed.

May the Lord enlighten, confirm, purify and corroborate your minds and your hearts. For my part, I assure you of a special remembrance in my prayers. Be certain that I am following activity and that I expect a great deal from you on the level of a fruitful evangelical witness "for a New Humanity," according to the theme of your conference.

And, together with my affection, may my heartfelt Apostolic Blessing always accompany you which I am happy to impart to you and which I am glad to extend to your loved ones, your friends and to all those whom you will meet along your journey along the paths of the world.

Text of Pope John Paul II's discourse reprinted from the *Osservatore Romano,* English Edition, April 18, 1985.

Images FOR words

"Indeed, whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind is, even unaware, being led by the hand of God."

Gaudium et Spes

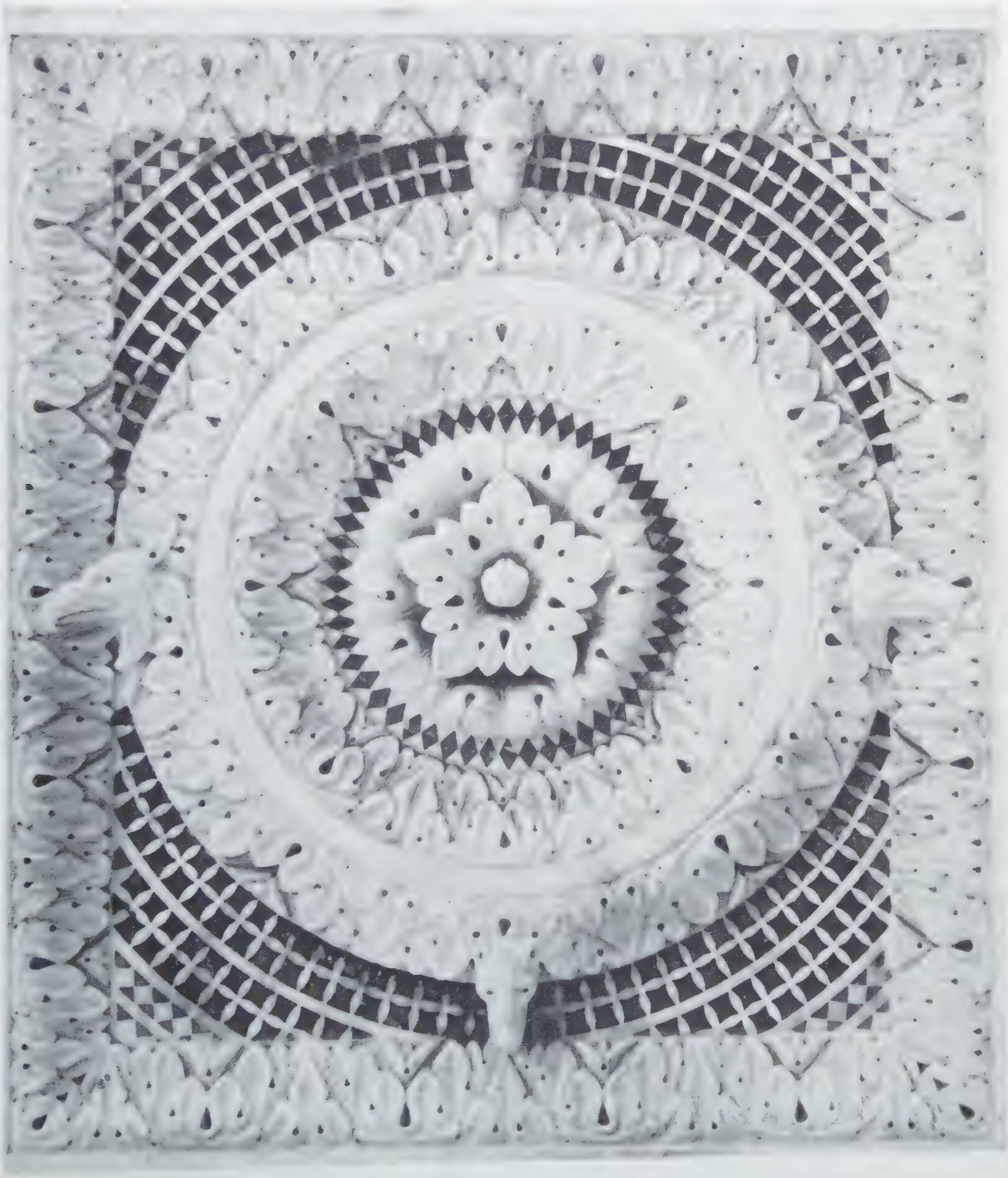


Photo courtesy of Italian Cultural Institute

WORD OF LIFE

"There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."

(Luke 12:32)

AUGUST

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

We are considering one of the most fascinating pages of the Gospel. Jesus says: "Do not worry about your life and what you are to eat, nor about your body and how you are to clothe it... Think of the ravens. They do not sow or reap, they have no storehouses and no barns; yet God feeds them.... Think of the flowers; they never have to spin or weave; yet I assure you, not even Solomon in all his regalia was robed like one of these.... Set your hearts on his kingdom, and these other things will be given you as well" (Lk. 12:22-31).

It is at this point that Jesus adds:

"There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."

The image of a flock is already present in the Old Testament and is used in reference to the chosen people. The characteristic of this particular flock is that it is "little."

What did Jesus intend to convey by using this adjective?

Did he perhaps mean the tiny number of disciples in a world which would seem to crush them; or the situation of inferiority in which some believers would find themselves? Perhaps it meant their being "poor" mindful of Jesus' warning that they should place their confidence in the Father who knows how to provide for them. Perhaps "little" indicates simplicity.

Jesus tells this little flock not to be afraid because the Father loves it and has promised to give it the kingdom.

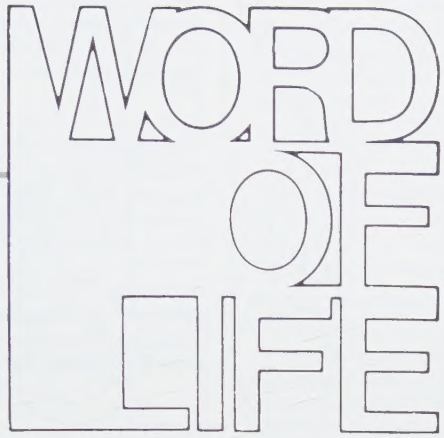
"There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."

"The kingdom." What is the kingdom? What is this kingdom promised by Jesus?

The "kingdom of God" means the realization of God's will, of the entirety of his holy, sanctifying will. And since history is still in the making, God's holy will has not yet been fully accomplished. This final realization of God's will is his gift, and for this reason Jesus invites us in the "Our Father" to invoke its coming with the words: "your kingdom come." But we human beings are also involved in this: when we act in conformity with God's will, we build up his kingdom with him.

Since Jesus came into the world and was victorious over it, this kingdom is already present here on earth and its fulfillment, which will end the course of history, is already assurred. The Church is the community of those who believe in this kingdom, and the Church itself is the beginning of this kingdom.

The Father entrusted this present and future kingdom to the



"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

(Lk. 16:13)

SEPTEMBER

little flock of disciples to whom Jesus said:

"There is no need to be afraid, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom."

Can we too live these wonderful words which Jesus addressed to his disciples? Are they also directed to the Christians of the twentieth century? — for example to some little, insignificant groups of believers who may find themselves lost in the midst of a secularized world, or in some nations dominated by consumerism or other forms of materialism, evil and indifference?

Yes, of course. These words are for us, too. Jesus is also inviting *us* not to be afraid.

Although we are few, poor, "little" and defenseless, we must vanquish all the fears which a hostile world may provoke; we must overcome every difficulty, persecution and suffering. We must not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by the apparent superiority of the world; nor can we remain closed within ourselves. In short, we must drive away fear from our hearts.

Jesus promises us something incredible: his kingdom, his own presence in our midst if we are authentic Christians striving wholeheartedly to accomplish God's will which can be summed up in mutual love.

Chiara Lubich

This is a statement which is derived from experience. We know it is true, because we have experienced it, that when we serve two masters, we make comparisons and end up liking one better than the other and serving one better than the other.

Jesus adds, "You cannot serve God and mammon," using this saying to affirm the necessity of a radical choice — the choice of God.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

"Mammon" is the embodiment of wealth and money, considered not in themselves but as goals to which people turn their hearts and their lives.

In fact, Jesus does not condemn the possession of wealth as such, but the misuse to which it can be put. Wealth can be an excellent tool if used to serve the needy, to do good and to promote social well-being, that is, if utilized to acquire a capital of good works.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

What Jesus condemns is the attachment to money. People who are attached to wealth end up enslaved to it, in love with it. It demands their complete commitment, all their attention, their interest, their strength; it becomes their ideal in life, their idol. In their hearts God and mammon are like two gods in competition.

But a person has one heart and can give it to only one ideal. One cannot be at the service of two masters.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Those who put their trust in something other than God, are showing that they do not acknowledge him as Father, nor do they believe that he takes care of them in all the circumstances of their lives. Therefore, to focus one's heart on wealth means to turn away from God, to put oneself in the condition of not loving him.

Rich people are certainly not the only ones who run this risk.

Anyone can make this mistake: it is enough to become overly attached to something, someone or oneself.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate

the one and love the other, or else he will stand by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

How do we live this word of life?

With these words Jesus is not offering us the alternative of choosing God or mammon. He says clearly that it is God whom we must choose in life.

Perhaps we have not done this yet. Perhaps we have mixed a little faith in him, a few religious practices and a certain love for our neighbor with many other riches, great or small, which fill our hearts.

If we take a close look at ourselves we will be able to see if what matters most to us is work, family, studies, success, health or one of the many other things in life which we love for themselves or out of self interest, ignoring God completely.

If this is the case, our hearts are already enslaved; our lives are centered on idols incompatible with God.

What should we do then? We must decide in our own hearts and then tell God that we want nothing else but to love him with all our hearts, our minds, our strength. And then we must strive to fulfill this resolution, which is not difficult if we do it moment by moment — now, in the present moment of our lives, loving everyone and everything out of love for God alone.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences in living the Gospel which some of our readers have shared with us.

THE UNEXPECTED CHANCE

One recent evening I found myself unexpectedly babysitting four of our smaller children. Our two oldest needed to attend meeting and my wife had to go with them. I was left with needing to bathe the two youngest ones and then rock them to sleep after they were ready to go to bed.

But our two oldest girls saw that I was tired from a long day so before they left they helped me by bathing the two little ones. Afterwards, I got them ready for bed and soon they were asleep.

I was ready to sit down and enjoy a T.V. program when I glanced over at the kitchen and realized that there hadn't been enough time to clean it after we'd eaten and I thought to myself: "Well, when the girls get home they can clean it then." Then I recalled the word of life, "Anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant" (Mk. 10:43).

I also remembered how my daughters had lived the word of life by choosing to help me just before they left so I decided to love them by cleaning the whole kitchen and being a servant to them.

When they finally arrived home again, they weren't their usual lively selves but when they came out of the kitchen they had big smiles and thanked me. It seems they had a lot of homework to do that night but first the kitchen had to be done. Since I'd done it for them they were able to get right to their homework instead and they were happy.

I was happy too, love seemed to envelope my large beautiful family.

R.B.

LETTING GO OF MYSELF

Recently I needed to hire some employees for the company I work for. I had the choice of hiring one full-time employee or two part-time. I preferred hiring two part-time employees. This would make it easier for me and the others to schedule holidays. My boss, however, needed to cut back on expenses so one full-time employee was more to his advantage. I saw his point, but I was being selfish; I wished to hold on to my own idea.

As my boss and I were discussing the situation, I realized that if I were to make myself one with him, I would have to let go of my idea and with it let go of my selfishness. My way to love him was to go with his ideas and to follow them through with joy.

As soon as I did this for him, I gained the hundredfold[1]. Because no sooner had I told him that I would go ahead with his idea, than he insisted on going ahead with mine. I am now in the process of hiring two part-time employees.

P.S.

1) Cf. Mk. 10:29-30.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT —SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

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